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A VIEW  
OF THE  
AMERICAN SLAVERY  
Question.

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NEW YORK:

JOHN S. TAYLOR, BRICK CHURCH CHAPEL,  
OPPOSITE THE CITY HALL.

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1836.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE following view of the American Slavery Question is the substance of two discourses prepared by the author in October, 1835, with particular reference to the condition of his own church. When called to the pastoral care of this church, he found its members divided in their views, and disunited in their feelings, on this much agitated subject. It appeared to him that it might be presented to their minds in such a manner as to gain the assent of all on every important point. With this view these discourses were prepared and delivered. The result was a spirit of harmony and good feeling in the church. They are now, with some additions, presented to the public eye. That they will receive the entire approbation of

all Christians, he does not expect. They are his own views on this momentous question, honestly and frankly expressed. He has occasionally censured those whom he loves and esteems: he has done it openly, because he believes that this is demanded by the interests of truth. The only favor he asks of his readers is that they would suspend their judgment until they have perused the entire volume through, and then treat his arguments with fairness and Christian courtesy.

It has occurred to the author that one expression found in the following work—"men are God's property," &c.—is liable to be misunderstood. The author does not mean to assert that God does, or can, consistently with truth and justice, treat men as *things*, but simply that He only has a right to exercise unlimited control over them as their Creator and Proprietor. Their rights as moral agents are inviolable in his eyes.

THE AUTHOR.

*New York, January, 1836.*



## THE

# AMERICAN SLAVERY QUESTION.

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## SLAVERY DEFINED.

THAT we may profitably discuss the question of *American slavery*, we must first have a clear idea of *the condition of slavery* stripped of every accompanying circumstance. The laws of Louisiana and South Carolina shall furnish us with definitions.

“A slave is one who is in the power of a master to whom he belongs. The master may sell him, dispose of his person, his industry, his labor ; he can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire any thing but which must belong to his master.”—*Louisiana Code, Art. 3.*

“Slaves shall be deemed, taken, reputed, and adjudged to be chattels personal in

the hands of their masters and possessors, to all intents and purposes whatsoever.” —*Laws of South Carolina—Brevard’s Digest*, 229.

It follows, by natural consequence, that the master claims as his lawful property the offspring of his female slaves, whoever may be their father, upon the same ground that the farmer does the increase of his flocks and herds, viz. that they are *his chattels personal*. Accordingly the laws of slave-holding states declare that “all the issue and offspring of slaves, born or to be born, shall be and remain for ever hereafter absolute slaves, and shall follow the condition of the mother.”

Again: since the body of the slave derives all its value from the mind which animates it, the power of the master to use the body of his slave as a personal chattel for his own advantage, necessarily includes the power to use his mind also for

the same purpose. The slave has no more right, in the view of the slave-laws, to use his intellectual, than he has to use his corporeal powers, in the pursuit of his own individual happiness. If the acquisition of knowledge diminishes his value as a personal chattel, his owner must place beyond his reach all the means of knowledge. Accordingly, in most of the slaveholding states, it is made a high crime and misdemeanor to teach a slave to read or write, or to give him any book or pamphlet, not even excepting the word of God!

*Slavery* is the condition of slaves,

*The system of slavery, or the slave system* is that system of laws which regards one portion of the community as slaves, and which authorizes another portion of the community to hold them as such.

*Slave-holding* is holding men as slaves under this system, and *a slave-holder* is

one who holds his fellow-men as personal chattels.

In the present inquiry I shall use the terms *slave-holding*, *holding men in slavery*, *holding men as personal chattels*, *holding men as property*, and *holding property in men*, as convertible. Let it be remembered that when I speak of *slaves*, I mean HUMAN BEINGS HELD AS PERSONAL CHATTELS, agreeably to the definition above given; and when I speak of *slave-holders* I mean those who hold men as *slaves*, and not something else.

### MORAL CHARACTER OF THE SLAVE SYSTEM.

THE SYSTEM OF SLAVERY IS DIRECTLY OPPOSED TO THE FUNDAMENTAL LAW OF LOVE WHICH GOD HAS GIVEN MEN IN HIS BIBLE FOR THE REGULATION OF THEIR CONDUCT TOWARDS EACH OTHER.

One form in which this law is expressed is the following: "*Thou shalt love thy*

*neighbor as thyself.*" In direct opposition to this, the slave system authorizes the master to love himself supremely, and to buy, sell, and use his neighbors and their offspring, soul and body, as chattels personal, for his own private advantage. He may indeed treat his slaves in some respects benevolently, but he will do so not *in accordance with* the spirit of the system, but *in spite of it*.

Another form in which this great law of love is expressed is this: "*Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them.*" In direct opposition to this, the system of slavery authorizes the master to do to his fellow-men what he would not, in any case, that they should do to him. He may honestly believe that were he a slave in certain supposable circumstances, (perhaps those of his own slaves,) he should wish to have his master retain over him the power of a guardian; but can he believe that he

should ever be willing to be converted into an article of merchandise, and subjected to the despotic power of the highest bidder? Impossible.

Another form is this: "*Love worketh no ill to its neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*" In direct opposition to this, the slave system authorizes the master to work the most grievous ills to his colored neighbor. The following catalogue of these ills is from the pen of one whom all admit to be a competent witness, Jeremiah Hubbard, of North Carolina, a zealous advocate of colonization. The same enumeration of wrongs is found in Stroud's Sketch of the Laws of Slavery, Chap. II., from which it appears to have been copied.

"There can be no legal marriage among slaves but what can be broken by the master whenever it suits his passions or his avarice. Slaves cannot redeem themselves, nor obtain a change of masters,

however cruelly they may be treated ; nor be parties before a judicial tribunal in any species of action against their masters, how atrocious soever the injuries they may have received from them. The masters may determine the kind and degree of labor to which the slave shall be subjected, and supply him with such food and clothing only, both as to quantity and quality, as he may think proper, or find convenient. The master may at his own discretion inflict grievous scourging or chastisement upon his slave. Slaves have no legal rights of property in things real or personal ; whatsoever they acquire belongs, in point of law, to their master. Slaves, being personal chattels, are at all times liable to be sold absolutely, or mortgaged, or leased at the will of the master ; they may be also sold by process of law for the satisfaction of debts of the living or deceased master, at the suit of creditors. And all the power of the master may be

exercised not by himself only in person, but by any one whom he may depute as his agent."

Lest I should be accused of making garbled quotations, I cheerfully add the remainder of his description.

"There may be mitigations to some of these traits of slavery by modern enactments of some of the slave-states; this is about its general picture as it is legalized in this country; it is, however, but justice to add that these great legal powers of the masters are abundantly mitigated in the practice of latter times; there is not near the personal abuse of slaves now, generally, that there was thirty, forty, or fifty years ago, and they are generally much better fed and clothed. A cruel master is now unpopular in great slave-holding counties, but, with all these mitigations slavery is still an enormous evil—a course of monstrous injustice."

The accuracy of these statements, so



far as the region in which this writer resides is concerned, I am not disposed to question. The amount of them is that the "*great legal powers of the masters are abundantly mitigated in the practice of modern times.*"—In other words, *the masters, in modern times, do not by any means work all the ills to their neighbors which this unrighteous system authorizes.* It may be said with truth that supreme selfishness, instead of love, is the fulfilling of its fundamental principle.

The slave system being thus directly opposed to the great law of benevolence is SINFUL.

THE SYSTEM OF SLAVERY IS DIRECTLY  
OPPOSED TO THE FAMILY RELATION  
AS ESTABLISHED BY GOD.

By this institution husband and wife are indissolubly joined together until death ;

not only that they may solace each other amid the toils of life, but that each individual of the human family may, from the commencement of his existence, enjoy the permanent watch, care, discipline, and government of one man and one woman. It is no exaggeration to assert that this divine ordinance involves the virtue and happiness of the globe. Accordingly, God has guarded it against violation in all its parts by the severest sanctions. "Have ye not read," asks our Saviour, "that he who made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." In defiance of this law of Jehovah, the saviours of the world have been the master to put asunder for ever husband and wife at his own pleasure;

for they are "deemed, taken, reputed, and adjudged to be his chattels personal to all intents and purposes whatsoever." "There can be no legal marriage among slaves but what can be broken by the master whenever it suits his passions or his avarice." Can any thing be dearer to a man than his wife, or, to a wife than her husband? Yet the slave-laws say to the master, "You may lawfully tear them from each other's arms whenever it suits your convenience."

Not is the relation of parent and child any more regarded by these laws. As soon as the children have arrived at an age suitable for labor, they may be separated from their mother, and sold at any moment. Can any treasures be more precious to a mother than her offspring? Yet of these treasures her master may legally plunder her at pleasure.

I am happy to testify, from my own observation, that many masters respect the

parental and filial relations of their slaves; but this they do, not *in accordance with* the great principle of slavery, but *in opposition to it*.

The slave system, being thus directly opposed to the family relation, as established by God, is SINFUL.

THE SYSTEM OF SLAVERY IS EVIL IN ALL ITS TENDENCIES.

We must carefully distinguish between the evils which grow out of the *abuse* of a thing, and the evils which are its *appropriate results*. The gospel, when faithfully preached, *tends* to bring men to repentance: if resisted, the result is increased obduracy: this is chargeable, however, not on *the gospel*, but on *the abuse* of the gospel; since it is not the preaching of the truth that hardens men's hearts, but the *resistance* of this truth. Gambling, on the contrary, *directly leads* to idleness

and dishonesty. When it results in these vices, it is justly chargeable with them, for they are its appropriate consequences. My design is to show that the slave system naturally tends to produce, and does actually produce, the most enormous evils of every kind.

1. One of its obvious tendencies is *to multiply instances of individual cruelty.*

The connection between despotic power and cruelty is so well understood in this country, that it would be superfluous to attempt to prove it. Now the slave-holder is the most absolute despot on the face of the globe. "The master may determine the kind and degree of labor to which the slave shall be subjected, and supply him with such food and raiment only, both as to quantity and quality, as he may think proper, or find convenient. The master may, at his discretion, inflict grievous scourging, or chastisement, upon his slaves; nor can they obtain any legal redress,

how atrocious soever the injuries they may have received from him." Every man, in the exercise of his common sense, might determine beforehand, from the uniform experience of the world in all ages, that such irresponsible power would be abused, and we know from observation that it is abused. It is not my intention to bring a sweeping charge of cruelty against the mass of slave-holders, (as has been sometimes unjustly done by Northern men,) nor to prove that the *majority* of them are cruel. My object is to show that the whole tendency of the system is to cruelty. I shall content myself with asserting, what I know to be true, that multiplied instances of the most revolting cruelty do occur as the proper results of the system. When known, they generally excite the indignation of the community; but, alas! if the master possesses an ordinary degree of prudence, they need not be known, for no *slave can bear testimony against his proprietor.*

The extreme cruelty of the domestic slave trade, all candid men admit. Yet this is but *a legitimate branch of the slave system*. It is sustained by three classes of men, all influenced by the love of money ; the *slave-growers*, the *slave-traders*, and the *slave-purchasers*, principally in the southwest. The slave-grower raises his slaves expressly for the market, and as soon as they have arrived at a suitable age, he tears them from their parents, and consigns them over into the hands of the slave-trader, for money. The slave-trader hurries them to Louisiana, or the adjoining states, and there delivers them into the hands of the slave-purchaser, for money. The slave-purchaser places them on his plantation, and wears out their lives with labor, beneath the southern sun, for money. Now, if the slave system is lawful, this is certainly a fair and honorable business. If two neighbors, on adjoining plantations, have a right to traffic in human flesh,

why have not two planters in different counties, in different states, in different sections of the United States? And why have they not a right, like other men, to employ their agents? Why should *these agents* be loaded with public odium, while *their employers* escape censure? The domestic slave-trade, then, with all its abominations, is a legitimate appendage of the system.

Thus much respecting the tendency of the slave system, to multiply instances of individual cruelty. To many this tendency will appear too obvious to need illustration. I have introduced it because it has an important bearing on the argument respecting the moral character of the system itself.

2. Another obvious tendency of the system of slavery is *to multiply unjust and cruel laws*.

This tendency may be illustrated in various ways.



The slave-laws begin by depriving the colored man of a right which this nation has, in the most solemn and public manner, pronounced to be unalienable—LIBERTY. Now, it is a well known principle of morals, that *one sin unrepented of leads to another of the same kind*. The merchant who has embarked in one dishonest scheme for making money, will be naturally drawn into others. The man who has uttered one falsehood, will add twenty more for the sake of concealment. So here. The slave-laws having begun by robbing the slave of his liberty, it is not surprising that we find them in the next place depriving him of the right of trial by jury, and then forbidding him to read God's Holy Word. The tendency of this, as of all despotic systems, is from bad to worse.

Again: Slaves being in the most absolute sense the property of their masters, it is necessary that the latter should have unlimited control over them; other-

wise, they would cease to be slaves. It would be an insufferable annoyance that these "personal chattels" should speak, and complain of the hard treatment to which they might happen to be subjected. Hence, the slave-laws provide that no slave shall be a party before a judicial tribunal, in any species of action against his master, how atrocious soever the injuries he may have received from him ; and, furthermore, that no slave shall be permitted to bear testimony against any white man. Resistance to their owners, on the part of these "personal chattels," must by no means be tolerated. Hence, we need not wonder at the following enactment in the slave-code of Georgia : " If any slave shall presume to strike any white person, upon trial or conviction, before the justice, or justices, according to the directions of this act, he shall, for the first offense, suffer such punishment as the said justice, or justices, shall, in their discretion, think fit—not ex-

tending to life or limb ; and for the second offense, suffer death." Many similar laws might be collected from the codes of the several slave-holding states, but the above will suffice for an illustration.

Again : Slaves being unjustly deprived of their most sacred rights, it is necessary that they should be kept in a state of ignorance and degradation. When men are to be governed AS MEN, by equitable and wholesome laws, the more intelligence they possess the better. But when they are to be despoiled of freedom, and bought, sold, and used as " chattels personal to all intents and purposes whatsoever," the more profound the ignorance in which they are immersed, the better. God has implanted in the human soul an unconquerable love of liberty. Men will never voluntarily consent to be slaves, and they cannot be held in slavery by physical power, unless they are first reduced to such a deplorable state of ignorance and consequent helplessness, that they shall neither understand

their rights, nor be able to defend them. All this the slave-holding states have long understood. Hence, as the number of their slaves has multiplied, they have multiplied the obstacles to their mental improvement. They have deprived them of the means of furnishing their minds with knowledge, for the same reason that they have prohibited them from bearing fire-arms, viz. that they might make them entirely subservient, as personal chattels, to their own interests.

So early as 1740, South Carolina, while yet a province of Great Britain, enacted the following law: "Whereas the having of slaves taught to write, or suffering them to be employed in writing, may be attended with great inconveniences, Be it enacted, that all and every person and persons whatsoever who shall hereafter teach, or cause any slave or slaves to be taught, to write, or shall use or employ any slave as a scribe in any manner of writing whatso-

ever hereafter taught to write, every such person or persons shall, for every such offense, forfeit the sum of one hundred pounds current money."—2 *Brevard's Digest*, 243.

In 1771, Georgia passed a similar act with a less penalty.

In the revised code of Virginia, 1819, we find the following: "All meetings or assemblages of slaves or free negroes or mulattoes mixing and associating with such slaves at any meeting-house or houses, or at any other place," &c., "in the night, or at any school or schools for teaching them reading or writing, either in the day or night, under whatever pretext, shall be deemed and considered unlawful assemblies," &c.—1. *Rev. Code*, 424-5.

In 1800, the State of South Carolina had previously passed a similar law.

As the number of the slaves and the consequent difficulty of governing them

has increased, the number and severity of these enactments has proportionally increased. By the existing laws of the majority of the slave-holding states, to teach a slave (and in many states a free negro) to read or write is forbidden under heavy penalties. In North Carolina, for example, to teach a slave to read or write, or to sell or give him any book or pamphlet, is an offense punishable with thirty-nine lashes, or imprisonment, if the offender is a free negro ; but if a white, then with a fine of two hundred dollars. Similar laws exist in the southern states generally.

Thus is the written word of God sealed up by law from the colored man for whom Jesus died. The authors of these laws do in effect say to the Redeemer, " Thy gospel which thou hast given for the instruction of all nations we will not permit our slaves to read ; for if they do, we cannot keep them in bondage." With the correctness of their reasoning I am not at present con-

cerned. That the perusal of the Holy Scriptures would excite rebellion among the slaves, no man in his sober senses can for a moment believe. But that *intelligence* which the ability to peruse them implies would, in the estimation of the slave-holding states, make it impossible for them to keep their slaves any longer in subjection by physical power, the final resort of all who despoil their fellow-men of their just rights.

In such abominable laws the system of slavery must inevitably end sooner or later. The discussion of this question at the North may hasten their development; for the clearer the light which shines through the community on the sin of holding men in slavery, the thicker and closer must be the bandage of ignorance which the legislatures draw over the eyes of the slaves.

3. It is hardly necessary to add, that another tendency of the slave system is

*every way to degrade the entire colored population of the United States.*

Deprived of freedom, subjected without hope of remedy to individual caprice, transferred from master to master at the pleasure of others, debarred by the strong arm of oppression from all privileges of mental improvement, and their domestic relations disregarded by the laws,—the mass of the slave population in the Southern states is, by the confession of all, sunk in profound ignorance and degradation.\* Nor is the influence of this system on the free black population hardly less pernicious. It has been the uniform policy of the slave-

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\* A violent opponent of northern abolitionists, who is evidently disposed to give the most favorable view possible of the condition of the slaves, writing from Alabama, says: "In many respects slaves are as moral as the whites. They are restrained by their owners from fighting, drinking, and idling. With *little* motive to be continent, and *NONE* to seek the honor of being virtuous, they, like the savages of this latitude, are frequently, though not universally, without chastity." The underlining is my own.



holding states to keep them in a feeble and depressed condition, well knowing that in proportion as their numbers, elevation of character, and influence increase, they will become sources of perpetual discontent to the slaves. Hence all the impediments, so numerous and formidable, thrown in the way of those who would manumit their slaves: hence, in several of the slaveholding states, enactments making it penal for a white man to teach a *free* negro to read.

In the free states, too, the free negro is doomed to feel the oppressive influence of this unrighteous system. For he belongs to a race enslaved, despised, and trampled under foot for two centuries; with whom the community have always been accustomed to associate the ideas of servitude, inferiority, and degradation.

It is not wonderful that narrow minds, accustomed only to contemplate present results, without regard to the connection

of cause and effect, beholding their deplorable condition, and perhaps baffled in their attempts to elevate particular individuals in the face of all these formidable obstacles, should hastily conclude that the African race are incapable of lofty elevation of character and self-government.

4. I add that the tendency of the slave-system is *every way injurious to the slave-holding part of the community.*

One of its deplorable effects is *to blunt the moral sensibilities of the master.* No man at the present day, can maintain and practise the system of slavery with a clear conscience. Excuse himself as he may, the conviction will still remain that he is doing wrong. If he comes to the light, his guilt stares him in the face; and if he avoids it, he knows that in so doing he sins. In either case his conscience is defiled, and his moral feelings are blunted.

Another effect of the system is *to discourage industry, and consequently to*

*encourage idleness and vice among the white population.* 'This is so evident as to need no illustration.

Another effect is *to encourage licentiousness.* It is not my intention here to bring a sweeping charge of licentiousness against all slave-holders, which would be indeed slanderous in the highest sense of the word. It is sufficient to remark, that the female slave has no protection against the white man. She may cry, but the laws have carefully provided that her voice shall not be heard. How far this unlimited power is abused I shall not stop to inquire. It is admitted by all candid men that licentiousness, both among the slaves and the whites, is one of the deplorable fruits of this system.

Another effect is *to discourage education*, by separating the planters so widely from each other, that they cannot conveniently maintain schools. The slave-holding states have always produced, in abun-

dance, men of highly gifted and cultivated minds; but it is not true that the mass of the community in these states, has ever been well educated.

Another effect is *to produce inequality of property among the whites.*

Another effect is *to discourage enterprise.* Slave-labor, though it may be in individual instances more profitable, is, in the aggregate, less profitable than that of freemen. Thousands of intelligent men in these states feel, and frankly acknowledge, that slavery is, in this respect, a millstone about their necks.

In all these ways, the tendency of the system is injurious in its influence upon the white population of the slave-holding states.

5. Another tendency of the system of slavery is *to destroy that liberty of the press, and that freedom of speech and of discussion, which are the safeguards of this and of every republic.*

Based on injustice and oppression, it "hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest its deeds should be reprov'd." Its supporters manifest the most extreme solicitude to keep from the ears of their slaves the faintest whisper respecting their own guilt, well knowing that they cannot justify themselves to these slaves. Hence, every attempt in the slave-holding states to expose, with manly plainness, the wickedness of the whole system of slavery is perilous in the extreme. The ministers of the gospel, and the public press, may not plainly tell the masters that they are sinning in converting their fellow-men into personal chattels, upon pain of being dealt with as "incendiaries;" deplore the existence of the system as "a great evil," and "unjustifiable in the abstract," and propose various plans for its removal—they may in cautious terms,—but hold up, in clear light, its heinous guilt, and urge the masters to abolish it, *as sinful*, in the

speediest and best manner possible, they may not. Thus is freedom of speech and of the press, on a point of vital importance, virtually suppressed in the slave-holding states.

Already has the United States' mail been subjected, in violation of the constitution, to the surveillance of the Postmaster General and his subordinates, and now it is proposed to make such a surveillance legal. Respectable men have been informed by lawless associations of individuals, what publications they may, and what they may not, receive from the North, upon peril of being "lynched." Gov. Mc Duffie, in his last official message, advises to punish interference with the rights of the masters "*by death, without benefit of clergy.*" Under color of such a law, the citizen of South Carolina, or stranger sojourning there, who shall openly maintain that one man has no right of property in his fellow-man, or

that "all men are created free and equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," may be adjudged guilty of interfering with the rights of the master, and hung without mercy.

But this is not all. Our Southern brethren insist upon our putting a total stop to the discussion of this question. If we will not comply with this unreasonable demand, they predict a dissolution of the Union. They call upon our legislatures to pass laws for the suppression of anti-slavery meetings and publications. One of their governors has formally demanded from the governor of New York, the person of one of the citizens of this state, whose only offense is that he is a publisher of anti-slavery documents.

No books, sent to the Southern market, must allude to the sin of holding men in slavery; no bookseller, who would enjoy

their patronage, must publish anti-slavery works; and no merchant, who would grow rich by their custom must openly avow himself an anti-slavery man. Thus is the effort to suppress the discussion of this great question prosecuted with untiring energy. I do not say by the entire Southern community, but by those leading men among them who are determined to uphold and perpetuate the system of slavery.

It may be said, in their behalf, that they are not opposed to the simple discussion of the question, but to "the incendiary attempts of Northern fanatics." I would this apology for their violence were founded in truth. But what are facts? Can any thing be more calm, dispassionate, and free from the charge of incendiarism and fanaticism, than President Wayland's admirable chapter on Personal Liberty? Yet this has stirred up the most angry feelings in the bosoms of his Southern brethren in Christ; and now they are beginning to



warn slave-holding parents against placing their sons under his instruction. They plainly inform him that, if he will teach that men have no right to hold property in their fellow-men, they will withdraw from him their patronage. The truth is, that mode of discussing the slavery question will be most strenuously opposed by the supporters of the slave system, which produces the most rapid and powerful influence upon the public mind. I do not deny that some anti-slavery men at the North have been violent, abusive, and unchristian, in their language and spirit. But their faults, however much they are to be deplored, do not lie at the foundation of the violent excitement at the South. This arises mainly from *the moral character* of the system assailed. It is true of every system, that, in proportion as it is unjust and oppressive, its abettors will dread a bold and fearless discussion of its character. The wickedness of the American

slave system, then, may be measured by the strength of the opposition made by its advocates to a free and full discussion of its merits.

The tendency of this system to suppress freedom of speech and of the press is most alarming. Let this freedom, guaranteed to every citizen of the United States, by the constitution, be once destroyed *on this point*, and it will be an easy work to destroy it on every other point. Our tongues and our press will be placed under surveillance, as on the continent of Europe; and we shall become a nation of nominal free-men, but real bondmen.

6. Finally: The tendency of the slave system is *to scenes of bloodshed, massacre, and extermination*.

No good man at the North desires these awful results. No good man will encourage the slave to rebellion against his master. But this will, in all human probability, be the consequence of an attempt to

perpetuate the system. The immortal mind was made for freedom, and it will not willingly be deprived of the precious boon of its Creator. By the strong arm of power, men may be kept quiet in slavery for a season ; but their bosoms will rankle with deadly enmity against their oppressors, which will sooner or later break forth in desperate efforts at self-emancipation. The scenes at South Hampton show that ignorance is no safeguard against, but rather an incentive to, such efforts. Had these deluded wretches understood the physical force of their masters, they never would have dreamed of such a mad undertaking. How melancholy then is the prospect before us, unless this ruinous system be brought to a speedy and peaceful termination ! Plots, conspiracies, insurrections, massacres, and summary executions, may be expected to thicken, until one or the other race is exterminated. Were there no God in heaven, we might predict with

certainly the final triumph of the masters. But when we remember that he has solemnly pledged himself to avenge the oppressed, and punish the oppressor, our minds are left in solemn suspense. Whatever may be the fate of the slaves, we know that their masters, if they will persist in upholding this unrighteous system, shall not go unpunished. The history of the world speaks to them in unambiguous terms of a retribution to come, and God's word confirms the testimony of universal experience.

The system of slavery, then, being evil in all its tendencies, is **SINFUL**.

Here suffer me to remark that we are to judge of this system, as we do of every other system, by its *appropriate tendencies*. We are not to select isolated examples of extreme lenity, or extreme cruelty, and hold them up to public view as samples of the system. It frequently happens that unbigoted Northerners, who have, from a narrow and defective educa-

tion imbibed violent prejudices against Southern character in general, are induced to visit the slave-holding states. Here they fall perhaps into the bosom of a pious, humane, and accomplished family, and many such may be found in the South, where the slaves are treated with uniform kindness, and carefully instructed in the principles of the gospel. They see no whips, chains, or manacles; they hear no groans of oppression; mutual offices of kindness and good will alone meet their eyes. Suddenly, their early prejudices give way, and, as is natural to the human mind, they go to the opposite extreme. The medium through which they contemplate slavery divests it, to their vision, of all its horrors; and they write home to their friends at the North the most enchanting accounts of the system.

Another class of Northerners seem to delight in dwelling upon cases of extreme cruelty. One would think, to read their

narratives, and hear their public harangues, that every master is an inhuman monster, and every foot-step of the slave red with blood. Some of them are narrow-minded and ignorant men, who suppose the North to be the only abode of virtue, and others are influenced by a natural propensity to go to extremes on every subject. Now, the right way to determine the character of the slave system, is to consider its general tendencies. These are "only evil continually." In none of the slave-holding states do we see them fully developed. When the GENIUS OF SLAVERY shall have lacerated the body of every colored man with stripes, and galled the feet of every colored man with fetters; when it shall have despoiled him of his last remaining privilege, shut out the last lingering ray of heavenly light from his immortal mind, and sealed up his eyes in eternal night; when it shall have seared the consciences of the masters, as with a

hot iron, and spread indolence, licentiousness, ignorance, and poverty, through the community; when it shall have deluged the slave-holding states with blood, and ended in extermination; THEN, and NOT TILL THEN, will its malignant character be fully disclosed. May God, in his infinite mercy, prevent this awful disclosure, by pouring out upon all concerned in sustaining this system the spirit of hearty repentance!

I have shown that the system of slavery is directly opposed to the fundamental law of love which God has given men, for the regulation of their conduct towards each other, and to the family relation as established by God himself; and that it is evil in all its tendencies. For each and all of these reasons it is SINFUL.

I lay claim to no originality of argument. I have said nothing but what such men as Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, William Wilberforce, John Jay, and a host

more of philanthropists, have long since proved by unanswerable arguments. It may be asked, "Why dwell so long on the sinfulness of the slave system, when it is so generally admitted?" I answer,

1. Though the sinfulness of holding property in men is generally admitted at the North, in a general way, yet the reasons why it is sinful need to be specifically and distinctly stated, that the mouths of gainsayers may be stopped.

2. At the present crisis, this is especially necessary, since the violent opposition of many to a class of men at the North, termed *Abolitionists*, is leading them, if I mistake not, to overlook the insufferable guilt of that system which these men are opposing.

3. In no other way can a wholesome, powerful, permanent public sentiment in favor of the speedy removal of this guilty system be maintained in this nation. Let it not be said that the South will not regard the opinions of the North on this



subject. We are at present so divided and distracted by the violence of party spirit, that our Southern brethren hardly feel the power of our influence. Let the sentiments of the non-slaveholding states on this subject, be coolly, temperately, firmly, kindly, and unanimously expressed, and they will produce a slow but sure effect. United public sentiment, when based upon eternal truth, is omnipotent. So far as slavery exists under the authority of *the state legislatures*, we have *no right* to use any other weapon—we WILL ALLOW no other weapon to be used by our citizens—we DESIRE no other weapon.

The preceding arguments against the slave system are based rather upon the general principles of the Bible than upon specific texts. I am aware that its advocates claim the authority of Scripture in its behalf. Because slavery existed and was tolerated in the days of the Hebrew patriarchs, they maintain that it may lawfully

exist at the present day. It is one of the most odious features of the modern system of slavery, that, instead of keeping pace with the progress of the world in knowledge and improvement, it goes back into the ages of ignorance that are past, adopts their abuses, and then pleads them in its own justification. What was the condition of the bondmen and bondmaids whom the Hebrews were allowed to buy of "the heathen round about them," and of "the strangers that sojourned among them," and to "take as an inheritance for their children after them," is a question worthy of examination. That it corresponded entirely to the condition of our Southern slaves is not certain. But, however it shall be decided, it will not affect the scriptural argument against slavery. At that age of the world practices existed which we know, from the infallible testimony of God, to have been in themselves wrong; but which God "winked at" for

a season, till he should have established certain fundamental truths of primary importance. Thus Moses allowed a man whose wife found no favor in his eyes, because he had found some uncleanness [nakedness of a thing, *i. e.* blemish] in her, to write her a bill of divorcement, and to send her out of his house. This practice, our Saviour expressly informs the Jews, Moses suffered by reason of *the hardness of their hearts*, and severely condemns it, except in a specified case. So also polygamy was tolerated in the ancient patriarchs and kings, and laws were enacted regulating the conduct of the man who had two wives (Deut. xxi. 15-17.). Yet to practise polygamy after the example of the Hebrew patriarchs would be SINFUL.

The argument of Governor M'Duffie therefore, if it proves any thing, proves entirely too much for his purpose. "God forbid," he piously exclaims, "that my descendants, in the remotest generations,

should live in any other than a community having the institution of domestic slavery as it existed among the patriarchs of the primitive church, and in all the free states of antiquity." Surely this governor, who is so anxious to conform to the example of the ancient patriarchs, ought strenuously to recommend to his legislature the immediate passage of a law allowing the good citizens of South Carolina to have at least two wives apiece like Jacob, and to give these wives a bill of divorcement, and send them out of their houses, whenever they cease to find favor in their eyes, according to the practice of "the patriarchs of the primitive church."

But farther: In the law of Moses we find the following permission: "Both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids which thou shalt have shall be OF THE HEATHEN THAT ARE ROUND ABOUT YOU; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. Moreover, of the children of THE STRAN-

TERS THAT DO SOJGURN AMONG YOU, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land : and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession : they shall be your bondmen for ever " (Lev. xxv. 44-46.). Now, if every custom tolerated by God among the Hebrews may be lawfully imitated by the citizens of the United States, then have our Southern brethren a moral right to send out ships to the coast of Africa as our fathers did, that they may bring home cargoes of these "*heathen*" purchased of the native chiefs, to be their "bondmen for ever ;" and to buy up the children of the Cherokees, and other "*strangers that do sojourn among*" them, as an inheritance for their children after them. The laws of the United States and of the nations of Europe, which denounce the foreign slave-trade as piratical,

being at war with the practice of "the patriarchs of the primitive church," ought, according to this mode of reasoning, forthwith to be repealed.

With regard to the example of our Saviour and his Apostles, it is sufficient to remark, that they no where countenanced the system of slavery, but simply prescribed rules for regulating the conduct of masters and servants. This no more proves that they regarded the custom with approbation, than the fact that God prescribed rules for regulating the conduct of the man who had two wives proves that he approved of polygamy. The grand truth to be established at that day plainly was, *the divine origin of the Christian religion*. The practice of slavery was tolerated for a season, until, this religion having been firmly established, the proper time should come for bringing its benevolent principles to bear upon the system, and exterminating it from Christendom.

That this time has arrived, is evident from the fact that the great question of HUMAN RIGHTS is now, by the providence of God, brought so distinctly before the nations of the earth, that it is agitating them throughout the globe. In this momentous discussion the United States have stood forth as the avowed champions of liberty. We revolted from Great Britain UPON THE ABSTRACT QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. We took up our arms and maintained an arduous and sanguinary struggle for seven years against her fleets and armies, not because we were actually ground to the earth by oppression, but because we considered "*taxation without representation*" an intolerable grievance inevitably tending to oppression. The God of armies favored us, and we achieved our independence. From that day to this our halls of legislation have ceaselessly echoed with the sound of "LIBERTY AND EQUALITY;" and yet we

are holding more than two millions of men in a state of the most absolute servitude, and a portion of them too under the authority of the United States. Under the very walls of our capitol, where the sacred charter of our nation, which proclaims that "ALL MEN ARE CREATED FREE AND EQUAL," is deposited, men are bought and sold like cattle, disturbing our eulogies of "LIBERTY AND EQUALITY" by the clanking of their chains. The nations of Europe laugh at our inconsistency, and well they may. Wave after wave of burning sarcasm and ridicule is rolling in upon us across the wide Atlantic, nor have we any barrier to protect ourselves against its scalding influence, for it is the sarcasm and ridicule of truth. "What is the difference," they ask, "in a moral point of view, between buying a gang of slaves in the District of Columbia from their owners, and buying a cargo of slaves on the coast of Africa from their owners?" It



will not avail us to get angry at this taunting question. This will only increase their laughter. We must repent.

When we consider that men have pleaded the authority of the Holy Scriptures as a warrant to burn men alive for heresy ; that the monarchs of Europe profess to derive their despotic powers immediately from God, and call all resistance to their authority rebellion against heaven ; and that Satan himself quoted Scripture for the purpose of seducing our Saviour into sin ; we need not wonder to find the advocates of slavery claiming the sanction of a supremely benevolent God in favor of a supremely selfish system, which authorizes men to be bought and sold like cattle, which contemptuously disregards the family relation which God himself has established, and which seals up from the poor slave the word of eternal life which is able to make him wise unto salvation. When God shall " call evil good and good

evil ;" when he shall "put darkness for light and light for darkness," "bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter ;" then, and not till then, will he be found the patron of the American slave system.

#### THE SYSTEM OF SLAVERY NOT TO BE IN ANY WAY COUNTENANCED OR ABETTED.

The system of slavery having been proved by unanswerable arguments to be SINFUL, it follows that it is not to be in any way countenanced or abetted. Of the innumerable ways in which this may be done, I shall mention but one, namely, *practising the system*.

I wish it to be distinctly remembered that the question now under consideration is not how the penitent slave-holder shall dispose of his slaves ; whether he shall send them to Liberia, or to the Northern

States, or retain them on his plantation : nor is the question whether, in this latter case, he shall immediately manumit them in *legal form*, or shall remain for a limited period of time their *legal* master, while he expressly renounces all right in them as property, and treats them accordingly ; in short, does all that lies in *his* power to place them in the condition of freemen. On these points I intend to say a few words hereafter. The simple proposition which I am at present maintaining is that it is *unlawful to practise the system of slavery*. By practising the system of slavery, I mean *using the civil right which the slave-laws confer* TO BUY, SELL, AND HOLD MEN AS CHATTELS PERSONAL.

Thus to countenance and abet this unrighteous system by the most efficient of all means, **EXAMPLE**, is in no case whatever justifiable.

Does the slave-holder plead *necessity*?

He is under no necessity of using his

fellow-men as personal chattels. The legislatures can never compel him to do this. They may, and do, interpose the most formidable obstacles in the way of their emancipation. In many of the Southern States, for example, every slave manumitted in legal form, is required to leave the state within a certain number of days, under penalty of being seized by the civil authorities and sold into bondage. In such a case the master has certainly full power to say to his slaves, "I have no right in you or in any human beings as property: I will not sell you: I will not interfere with your domestic relations: I will secure to you, in the best manner possible, a just compensation for your services: I will faithfully instruct you and your children in the gospel of Jesus Christ; in short, I will, so far as lies in my power, treat you as freemen: if I do not immediately manumit you in legal form, it is because the laws, which I cannot

control, have made such a manumission null and void, and I should thus throw you out of the pale of my protection without benefiting you: I do in this respect to you, as I would wish to have you, in like circumstances, do to me: but I will be your proprietor *only in name*: you may at all times come to me for counsel and direction as to a father." Let him do this in the spirit of love; and let him also, in a firm, temperate, dignified, and constitutional manner, exert his influence in the manner which he shall conscientiously think wisest and best to induce his fellow-citizens totally to abolish the whole system, and he has in the spirit of the divine command, "broken the yoke, and let the oppressed go free." He is not considered by the community as countenancing or upholding the system. Thus much is clearly the immediate duty of every master. Ulterior duties will be determined by circumstances. It is of vast importance

that he should not only cease himself to hold property in his slaves, but that he should place them and their posterity beyond the power of his heirs, making them freemen not only *de facto* but also *de jure*; and he ought to omit no effort for the accomplishment of this desirable object.

Does the slave-holder plead *his personal kindness to his slaves*?

No personal kindness towards the small number under his immediate control can justify him in sustaining, by his example, a system fraught with injustice, oppression, and cruelty towards the entire colored population of the United States. He may comfortably clothe and feed his slaves; he may not tax them with labor beyond their strength: he may banish from his plantation the brutal practice of flogging; he may provide for their religious instruction;—but so long as he continues to act, in the face of the community, upon the

fundamental principle of slavery. which is that men may be converted into property and used as such, he is upholding the system with all its tremendous evils, however kindly he may treat his own slaves. He is guilty, not for his kindness to them, but for countenancing and supporting an unkind system which is crushing the colored man to the earth. He may make a temperate use of the absolute and irresponsible power of the masters, but others will certainly abuse it. It ought not to be possessed by any man living, and it is his duty, by his example, to say so. All attempts to sanctify the system of slavery by private benevolence towards the slaves are preposterous. As well might one attempt to sanctify the business of gambling, or selling ardent spirits.

Here suffer me to remark that the efforts of benevolent men to remove from our nation this fearful evil, ought to be

directed not principally against the *abuses* of the slave system, but against the *slave system itself*, the source of these abuses. The cause of emancipation is to be promoted upon the same principle as the cause of temperance, or the cause of religion generally. Were the advocates of temperance to aim their blows at *drunkenness* instead of *moderate drinking*, the fountain of drunkenness, what would they accomplish? Or, were the ministers of the gospel to be incessantly preaching against murder, theft, piracy, and the like, instead of laboring to reform men's unholy hearts whence all these bitter streams proceed, whom would they convert? Put a stop to moderate drinking, and drunkenness will cease of course. Sanctify men's hearts, and their external actions will, be right. So convince the slaveholder that the principle of holding property in man is essentially injurious to the best interests of society, and therefore sin-



ful; and induce him, upon conscientious grounds, to abandon it, and his reformation so far as this one sin is concerned, is thorough. Whereas, if we level our artillery mainly at the revolting abuses of slavery, he can easily evade its power by personal kindness to his slaves.

To send pamphlets, then, from the North to the South, embellished with cuts representing the painter, with his broad-shouldered brow, in the act of flogging his bleeding and manacled slaves, and abounding with anecdotes of extreme cruelty,—is to commit a manifold error.

It is an error in judgment: for it infallibly secures their rejection without a reading.

It is an error in ethics: for it is not in accordance with the principles of the gospel, that the truth should be vigorously dressed in the most revolting form possible, where there is already an almost insurmountable mass of prejudice to be encountered.

It is an error in logic ; for such appeals do not seriously disturb the conscience of the humane planter, which it is most important to reach.

Pamphlets in this style may have answered very well in England where the object was to induce a non-slaveholding population to legislate on the subject for a distant province ; but they are entirely out of place here. The masters to whom these publications are sent, hold in their own hands, by the admission of all, the exclusive power of abolishing slavery : they are morbidly jealous of foreign influence ; and the truth respecting the slave system, however kindly told, will be extremely unpalatable to the majority of them. In such circumstances it is the dictate of wisdom, of religion, and of sober reason to present it, not in the most revolting, but in the most conciliating manner possible.

Does the slave-holder plead that his slaves are *not fit for liberty* ?

What does he understand by conferring liberty upon his slave? Turning him loose at once upon society, and bidding him take care of himself? No man can believe this to be his duty. Let him renounce all right of property in his slaves, and treat them accordingly. Then he can employ them on his plantation as before; he can exercise a parental supervision over them; and in the mean time he can qualify them for self-government as fast as possible. If in the prosecution of this benevolent work the legislatures (that is, the majority of the slave-holders acting through their authorized agents) throw obstructions in his way, he is guiltless.

Does the slave-holder plead that *his slaves are better off than the free colored people*?

This plea is, in the first place, false, the slave-holders themselves being judges. They have provided by law for the manu-

mission of slaves who have performed important services to the state : a strange reward of merit truly, according to this doctrine !

This plea would not, in the second place, avail the slave-holder though its truth were admitted. For it is the *system of slavery* which has reduced the *free blacks* to their present degraded condition ; and he is not at liberty to plead the evil consequences of an unjust course of conduct as an excuse for its continuance.

Does the slave-holder plead that he *disapproves of the system of slavery in the abstract* ?

What is the system of slavery in the abstract ? It is the system existing only in theory ; for, wherever it actually exists, it is (to borrow the language of grammarians) not an *abstract* but a *concrete* thing. It has not a theoretical and general, but a real and particular existence. Now who is not opposed to all sin in the abstract ?

But perhaps the slave-holder means that, although he acknowledges *the general system* to be wrong, yet he is compelled, *in his particular circumstances*, to practise it. This plea of necessity has been considered above.

Does the slave-holder plead that *the Bible sanctions the holding of men in slavery?*

This plea has already been answered.

Does the slave-holder plead that *great and good men have by their example sanctioned this system without either remorse of conscience or censure of men?*

True. So also in olden times, great and good men, by their example, sanctioned polygamy, without either remorse of conscience or censure of men; and, in modern times, great and good men have, by their example, sanctioned the manufacture, sale, and use of ardent spirits, without either remorse of conscience or censure of men. "The times of this igno-

rance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent;" for on all these subjects "the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth."

Does the slave-holder plead that *he is not the author of the system, but that it has been entailed upon himself and his fellow-citizens by involuntary inheritance?*

This is certainly a palliating circumstance. The sons of New England who migrate to the South, and basely apostatize from the principles of their forefathers by becoming slave-holders, are far more guilty in the sight of God than the native citizens of the Southern States. Still the fact that they did not invent the system, but received it from their fathers, will not justify them in perpetuating it; otherwise there is an end to all reformatations and improvements in society.

Does the slave-holder plead that *his slaves are his lawful property?*

Let us examine the validity of his title. The authority under which he holds property in his fellow-men, is simply *the slave-laws of the state in which he and they reside*. These laws have been demonstrated to be contrary to God's law. They are therefore NULL AND VOID in the court of heaven, and all titles derived from them are equally null and void. God alone is the proprietor of men. They are his property and his only. The mortal who presumes to appropriate this property of Jehovah to himself, and to make merchandise of it for his own convenience, is embezzling the treasures of heaven, and will assuredly find his title to them set aside at the righteous tribunal of the universe. It is vain for him to plead that he found this property in the hands of a fellow-mortal, and paid him an equivalent for it. He knows that it belongs to God, and he ought either never to have received it, or immediately to return it to the right owner.

Slave-holders cannot justly demand an equivalent for restoring to their slaves their unalienable rights. This is nothing more than their duty, and no man can ask pay for doing his duty. The sacrifice may be in particular instances great. It will require the exercise of an heroic and generous spirit of self-denial and benevolence, comporting well with the generous and chivalrous character of the South. Our Saviour has expressly provided for such exigencies. "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." The general doctrine here inculcated is that *if men would enter heaven, they must make any and every sacrifice of their private interests which duty requires.*

The renunciation on the part of slave-holders of all property in their slaves,



does not, however, necessarily imply the total loss of all their services. Provided the manumitted slaves be still employed on the plantations as free laborers under such restraints as the legislatures may deem necessary for the welfare of the community, the arrangement would probably be attended with temporary loss to individuals, but certainly with ultimate gain to the people at large. 'The slaves held as property in the United States are valued, I believe, at upwards of eight hundred millions of dollars. We are gravely asked, "Do you expect the Southern States to sacrifice eight hundred millions of dollars?" By no means. Not unless the slaves are all to be colonized. Then the sacrifice must somewhere be made, either by the slave-holders themselves, or by their non-slaveholding brethren, or by both. But, if they are retained in the country, it is not necessary. Universal experience has demonstrated that

free labor is more profitable to the community than slave labor. Were the Southern States to substitute the former for the latter, they would eventually be gainers by the change.

According to the slave system the master furnishes his laborer with food, clothing, lodgings, and implements of every kind: in sickness, infancy, and old age he must be at charges for their maintenance without receiving any equivalent. The slaves, moreover, knowing that the avails of their industry belong wholly to their master, have, as a general fact, no motive to exert themselves except the fear of punishment. Hence, by the concession of all, the amount of labor performed by a given number of slaves, taken indiscriminately, is much less than the amount performed by the same number of free laborers. The latter, it is true, receive wages; but, on the other hand, they furnish themselves, and, besides, take care of their own

sick and infirm. Free labor will always be found, for these reasons, more profitable in the long run than that of slaves.

To bring the former system into complete operation where the latter has long prevailed, must necessarily be a work of time and labor. Ignorant and unaccustomed from childhood to provide for themselves, the slaves cannot be in a moment qualified for this work. The bare act of manumitting them will not thus qualify them. Yet this is no reason why the Southern States should not immediately begin in good earnest to effect the change, (provided the manumitted slaves are to remain at home, a question to be hereafter considered,) by abolishing all right of property in man, and suppressing the traffic in human flesh in every shape—by repealing all laws whose object is to impede the mental improvement of the slaves, and enacting laws of

an opposite character—by conferring upon them the right of trial by jury—and by securing to them, in some method, a just compensation for their services. It might, and doubtless would, be necessary that the masters should act for a period of time as guardians and conservators of their former slaves, a power for which the legislatures could easily provide. If it be replied that such a power might be abused to cruelty and injustice as well as the power of a slave-holder, I answer, To some extents it certainly could. No method of manumission can be devised that is free from all objections. The best ought to be selected by our Southern brethren, to whom belongs both the legal right and the responsibility of breaking the yoke, and letting the oppressed go free.

What has now been said respecting the duty of private slave-holders, applies with full force to the legislatures of the

Southern States, for they are nothing else but the slave-holders acting through their accredited agents.

We are now able, I trust, satisfactorily to answer the question so often asked: "What is the IMMEDIATE DUTY of slave-holders?" It is the duty of all who have in practice countenanced, abetted, and upheld the system of slavery, whether as private individuals or as legislatures, IMMEDIATELY to repent, and THEN to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance," as fast as is in the nature of things possible. ALL these fruits cannot be INSTANTLY exhibited. They must be developed, some IMMEDIATELY, and some GRADUALLY, according to circumstances. All are under immediate obligation to give up all property in their fellow-men, that is, to renounce for ever the right of buying, selling, holding, and using them as personal chattels. All are under immediate obligation to restore to their slaves the privileges of free-

men, so far as is in present circumstances practicable. All are under immediate obligation to exert their influence for the entire abolition of the system of slavery in the manner which they shall, after prayerful and honest inquiry, judge wisest and best for all parties concerned. That all are under immediate obligation to manumit their slaves *in legal form*, cannot, in my opinion, be maintained. Of what value can free papers be to a slave, where the laws refuse to recognise him as free? where they assume the right, notwithstanding these papers, of seizing, and selling him into remediless bondage? True, these iniquitous laws are perpetuated by the majority of the slave-holders. True, the master who cordially loves, and strenuously supports them, may plead them in self-justification, while he professes his vehement abhorrence of slavery in the abstract. Yet it is also true that the conscientious master, who abhors the whole

system, finds them a serious obstruction to his benevolent designs. Now, if we indiscriminately denounce all that sustain towards any of their fellow-men the legal relation of masters, whatever may be the obstacles thrown *by others* in the way of the *legal* dissolution of this relation, the slave-holder in heart will easily detect the fallacy of our arguments, and by occupying himself in their refutation, will divert his mind from his own personal guilt; while the honest and conscientious planter, who sincerely desires to learn and do his duty, finding himself unjustly accused, will be in danger of being alienated, embittered, and driven from us.

Whatever specific course is marked out for the slave-holder, he can, if he chooses, easily evade his duty. Let a spirit of hearty repentance and sincere benevolence animate the Southern States, and let them, under the influence of this spirit, address themselves in earnest to the work

of removing from their midst this enormous evil, and we may safely intrust to their judgment the details of emancipation. With them resides the sole power, and upon them rests the obligation, to legislate on this subject.

#### ULTERIOR DUTIES OF SLAVE-HOLDERS.

I have shown that the system of slavery is SINFUL, and, therefore, not to be in any way countenanced or abetted. How the slave population is to be disposed of, is a separate question, and one of momentous interest to the United States. Slaves are not puncheons of rum, or barrels of ale, that can be emptied into the streets at any moment, with no injury to any but their owners. Neither is the system of slavery a distillery or a brewery that can be pulled down, or converted to some other purpose at pleasure. The parallel, then, between



the slave system and the traffic in ardent spirits ought not to be pressed too far. Alcohol is *matter*, not *mind* : it can claim no rights nor privileges ; it is indeed a “nuisance,” which ought to be immediately abated. But slaves are immortal minds, having interests temporal and eternal. They have a right to live, and, unless exterminated, will live, and increase, and multiply, to the end of time. How, then, shall they be disposed of? Shall they be colonized in Africa, or elsewhere ; or shall they be retained on their native soil as free laborers under suitable restraints ? I hesitate not to affirm that the principle upon which these questions are to be answered is EXPEDIENCY, understanding by expediency not that which subserves men’s prejudices and selfish interests, but that which promotes the best welfare of the community. Where God has expressly legislated, we have but one course to pursue ; where he has only laid down general

principles, a careful consideration of probable results becomes our rule of duty. Such is clearly the present case. The broad and glorious principles of God's Word decide that the whole system of slavery is sinful, and ought to be abolished. They decide, also, that it ought to be abolished in such a way as shall be most conducive to the welfare of all parties concerned. What that way is, they do not decide. It is left to the judgment of our Southern brethren. Inasmuch as we have been called upon to aid in *one specific way*, it is neither impertinence nor officious intermeddling in us, to attempt to decide these questions for ourselves. Into the details of emancipation, we do not wish to enter. These we cheerfully leave where they properly belong. If it can be CLEARLY MADE OUT that the emancipation of the slaves at home upon any plan that would secure the accomplishment of the work in a definite and reasonably limited period of

time would prove the inevitable destruction of both masters and slaves, or of either party ; then they ought to be comfortably provided for in Africa, or elsewhere, at whatever expense ; and we ought to be willing, as philanthropists, as Christians, and as citizens of the United States, to bear our share of the burden. But, unless this position can be sustained by solid arguments, we ought conscientiously to withhold our countenance and support from a scheme which can never become practicable except under the pressure of extreme necessity, which involves a vast expenditure of labor and treasure, and which exposes more than two millions of colored men to all the hardships and perils of emigration across the wide Atlantic, from a temperate to a tropical climate, and from a civilized land to a land of hostile and treacherous barbarians. We may, in this latter case, patronise colonization for other reasons, but not as the remedy for slavery.

Justice and candor require me to state that many of the most strenuous advocates of colonization (I may say all sober-minded men, at least at the North) consider the scheme of transporting the entire mass of our colored population to Africa, as a wild and visionary project. They advocate the scheme principally on the ground of its beneficial influence upon Africa itself, and also of its salutary reaction upon the United States.

Neither ought we, in any case, to patronise this scheme, for the purpose of relieving our Southern brethren from the pressure of their surplus slave population, so that they shall thus be helped to defer repentance. Neither ought we, in my opinion, to advocate it for the purpose of enabling conscientious slave-holders to get rid of their slaves, unless we intend to carry it through as an effectual remedy for the evil. If the ultimate resort must be emancipation of the slaves on their native soil,

the sooner the South sees and feels this truth, the better. Let not the pious master, by his example, assist his fellow-citizens in keeping it out of sight. If he is disposed to send to Liberia a selection of the most virtuous and intelligent among his slaves, for the avowed purpose of aiding the colony, well and good. But let him not encourage the delusive idea that the slaves cannot be safely manumitted at home. He is under no necessity of sinning. If the laws forbid him to liberate his slaves in legal form, and provide for reducing them again, when thus liberated, into bondage, let him *treat them as free-men*, so far as lies in his power, and then exert his influence firmly, temperately, prayerfully, and perseveringly, for the ultimate abolition of the whole system. We ought either to take up the plan of colonization for the avowed purpose of removing from our nation the colored people, (or at least the great mass of them,) and to make

thorough work of it, or we ought publicly, totally, and for ever to divorce it from the question of abolition, and honestly say to our Southern brethren, "your ultimate resort must be home manumission." Then we may, if we please, patronise colonization upon the ground of its beneficial influence upon Africa, and, perhaps, the reaction of that influence upon the United States.

The question then to be decided is simply this : *Cannot the slaves be safely manumitted at home?* If not, then let us make a united effort at colonization. If they can, then let us rest the claims of the Colonization Society simply on its beneficial influence upon Africa ; or, if any choose, upon this and the reaction of this influence upon the United States.

*Cannot the slaves be safely manumitted on their native soil?* The assertion has been incessantly made at the South, and re-echoed at the North, that such a

measure would inevitably result in massacres, bloodshed, and extermination. The proof of this assertion has been repeatedly demanded, but has never yet been furnished; unless confident assertions, unsustained either by the character of God's government, the constitution of the human mind, or the universal experience of mankind, are proofs. Why should the substitution of the system of free for that of slave labor (*by the masters themselves, be it remembered, and not by a foreign power*) be followed by such disastrous consequences? The masters are not asked suddenly to release their slaves from all restraint; to turn them loose at once upon society to wander in lawless hordes over the country, plundering, pilfering, and murdering in their course. Interested demagogues have found it convenient to ascribe this mad scheme to prominent anti-slavery men, and then to get up a great excitement in opposing it. But not a solitary man at

the North who possesses a particle of good sense or information, ever dreamed of abolishing slavery in this way. The manumitted slaves need not leave the plantations of their former masters. If humanely treated, what reason is there to suppose that they would be disposed so to do? Ignorant and helpless as they are universally admitted to be, could they not be made to understand, with the help of a little kind explanation, the necessity of remaining under the guardianship of those who had been their masters? At all events THE LEGISLATURES MIGHT IMPOSE UPON THEM WHAT RESTRAINTS THEY DEEMED NECESSARY. They might even require them to remain for a limited period of time on the plantations of their former proprietors, and in the meantime they might qualify them by a benevolent course of education for farther privileges. *Restraint*, be it remembered, is not *slavery*. *Slavery* is the condition of *slaves*; and



slaves are human beings “deemed, taken, reputed, and adjudged to be chattels personal, in the hands of their masters and possessors, to all intents and purposes whatsoever.” To be in this condition is to be in slavery, not to be under wholesome restraint.

The manumission which we at the North advocate, is a *voluntary* manumission on the part of the masters. A class of men among us have been loudly accused of wishing to interfere with the rights of the masters, by effecting the abolition of slavery without their consent. How they would set about the accomplishment of such a preposterous and unconstitutional scheme it is difficult to conceive. We may safely affirm that the most ardent and sanguine among them never entertained even a distant idea of this quixotic enterprise. The United States cannot constitutionally legislate on this subject except for the District of Columbia. But were it

in their power to wrest the slaves out of the hands of the masters without their consent, disastrous consequences might then reasonably be expected to follow. In this case we might expect scenes of bloodshed and extermination, caused not by *the genius of voluntary emancipation*, but by *the genius of slavery*, arraying itself against the liberty of its subjects. All arguments against the safety of home abolition drawn from the evil results, real or pretended, of compulsory emancipation, (as in the British West India Isles,) are, therefore, utterly fallacious when applied to the United States. The question is not what would be the consequences were the slaves wrested by main force from the hands of their masters, but what would be the consequences were these masters, by their own voluntary act, to liberate their slaves.

Why should scenes of bloodshed follow? Were our Southern brethren willing this

day to abolish their slave-laws, and to substitute in their place wholesome and equitable laws for the regulation and government of the colored people, what mighty convulsion would be the result? The Word of God, the constitution of human nature, and the experience of all ages, testify, that to treat men with justice and benevolence is not the way to excite them to deeds of blood. The awful scenes of St. Domingo, be it remembered, were not the result of a voluntary act on the part of the masters manumitting their slaves. If there is a fanatical doctrine any where on this globe, it is the doctrine that by denying to the slaves their unalienable rights they can be prevented from cutting their masters' throats.

The system of slavery has been compared to a dam built across a river, which has caused the meadows above to be overflowed. It is admitted that this dam is a nuisance which ought to be abated, but

not too suddenly, lest the rush of waters should also injure the meadows lying below. If this comparison is designed to illustrate the folly of carrying out abstract principles of justice without regard to consequences, it certainly holds good. The dam ought not to be demolished so suddenly as to inundate the meadows below. But, if the object of the similitude is to prove that the slaves could not this day be safely emancipated, were the masters disposed to set them free, it is defective ; for it has not yet been shown that were the dam broken down at once in the middle to its foundations, *the waters would overflow their banks* so as to do serious injury.

The comparison may be, in my judgment, materially amended thus :

The slave system is a huge dam thrown across a broad and deep river for the private advantage of its proprietors. It is composed of enormous blocks of hewn granite, fastened together with massive iron bolts. The waters, impeded in their

natural course, have already overflowed many thousands of acres of their neighbors' land, and are rapidly setting back into the neighboring villages. The inhabitants remonstrate with the builders. They reply, "We admit that this dam is a great evil, abstractly considered; yet, if we were instantly to demolish it, it would ruin every plantation for twenty miles below." Meantime they keep at work making it longer and broader and higher. Might not their neighbors living above justly reply: We ask you first to stop building; then to go to work in good earnest in the centre of the channel, and demolish it as fast as you can: were it so weak as to be in danger of being suddenly carried away by the pressure of water above upon the removal of a few props, we would then say: Take care; don't go too fast. But now we say: You are in no danger of precipitancy; go to work with all your might, for you have an herculean task before you."

DUTIES AND RIGHTS OF NORTHERN  
MEN.

These are the following :

1. *To gain accurate information on the subject.*

The question of slavery is one of common concern to the citizens of this republic. The United States are "many members, yet but one body." They are so compacted together by their constitution, and by their natural relations to each other, that, "if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or, if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it." It is not impertinence nor officious intermeddling in us to investigate this question for ourselves. In so doing we must be careful to draw our information from authentic sources. If we rely on the *ex parte* statements of interested witnesses, we shall be certainly

misled; for in questions of this nature nothing is easier than *to utter falsehood by speaking the truth.*

One man goes into the plantation of a pious and humane planter, who treats his slaves with parental kindness, and faithfully instructs them in the doctrines and duties of revelation. Forthwith he sits down and presents us with a glowing portraiture of *Southern Slavery*, drawn exclusively from the materials which surround him, and well set off with bitter invectives against Northern fanatics and incendiaries, in which he is sure to betray his ignorance of their real motives, designs, and actions.

Another is brought into contact with masters of a different character. He sees slaves of both sexes, in the presence of a promiscuous crowd, laid prostrate on the earth, their hands and their feet bound with cords, their backs bared to the lash, their flesh quivering and bleeding at every

stroke, and all this at the caprice of an irresponsible individual. His blood boils within him, as well it may, at this disgusting scene of brutality; and straightway he sends on to the North *his* portraiture of *Southern Slavery*, where it is exhibited to the public as a precious jewel of truth, plentifully ornamented with hard names, like a gold ring set with diamonds. One-sided views of slavery of each of the above characters have been published in our journals *usque ad nauseam*.

If we are to adopt this method of investigation, there is an end to all certainty. The whole question of slavery becomes a perfect chaos "without form and void" enveloped in midnight darkness. The man who would arrive at correct conclusions himself, or guide others to correct conclusions, must take a different course. He must examine the system of slavery in its various tendencies, as they are actu-



ally developed at the South, and likely to be farther developed. He has certainly a right to exhibit instances of extreme cruelty as illustrations of one of its obvious tendencies. He has a right to inquire, and to ascertain if he can, how far the masters abuse the enormous legal powers which the slave-laws confer upon them; and to state the results of his investigations. This will require great candor, and extensive personal observation. If he errs at all, he ought certainly to err on the side of charity, instead of stretching the truth respecting the cruelty of slaveholders to its utmost limits.

2. *To diffuse this information through the community.*

This may be done by private and social intercourse, by epistolary correspondence, by the circulation of "writings containing temperate and judicious discussions," and by public debates and addresses. The right of free inquiry is the inheritance of

every American citizen. He is at perfect liberty to discuss whatever subject he chooses in a peaceable manner, without asking leave of any. Nor can he forfeit this invaluable right by his imprudence or intemperate zeal. If he slanders his neighbor, the law provides a remedy for the injured party, while it secures his future freedom of discussion unimpaired. Who does not know that the pretext which tyrants have always made use of for muzzling the press is its "seditious and incendiary character"? As American citizens, then, we are solemnly bound to guard against all encroachments upon this inestimable right, under whatever pretext.

But we have SPECIAL CLAIMS to the privilege of discussing the question of American slavery. The case stands thus :

Our Southern brethren declare a portion of their fellow-men to be "chattels personal in the hands of their masters and

possessors to all intents and purposes whatsoever."

They authorize their masters to separate for ever husband and wife, parent and child, whenever it suits their convenience.

They deny them the privilege of being parties to a judicial tribunal in any species of action against their masters, how atrocious soever the injuries they may have received from them.

They authorize their masters to supply them with such food and raiment only, both as to quantity and quality, as they shall think proper or find convenient.

They deprive them of all rights to hold property. "A slave can do nothing, possess nothing," (not even his wife and children,) "but which must belong, in point of law, to his master."

They authorize their masters to sell, mortgage, or lease them at pleasure.

They authorize them to be sold by process of law for the satisfaction of the

debts of their masters living or deceased, at the suit of creditors.

They authorize their masters to intrust all these despotic powers to any agent or agents whom they may choose to appoint.

They forbid their masters to manumit them, except in certain special cases, which must, in the nature of things, be of rare occurrence.

They deprive them of the right of trial by jury.

They seal up God's Holy Bible, by forbidding, under heavy penalties, their being taught to read.

All these accumulated injuries they make their innocent offspring heirs to "for ever hereafter."

And when these injured men, whom God created "free and equal," escape from under the oppressive weight of these unrighteous laws into the Northern States, they call upon us to deliver them up again into a system of bondage which we

utterly loathe and abhor ; and our magistrates are solemnly bound by their oath of office to comply with the demand !

Moreover, if these slaves should rise up in rebellion against their oppressors,\* we are bound by the constitution of the United States to spill our blood, and expend our treasures, in assisting their masters to regain their dominion over them :—yes, we are bound to hazard our fortunes and our lives in sustaining a system which authorizes men to be bought and sold like horses and mules, and which forbids them to read God's Holy Word !!

These are the demands of our Southern brethren. They claim our co-operation, according to the constitution of the United States, in sustaining this system of oppression **EVEN UNTO BLOOD** ; and when we attempt to remonstrate with them, they

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\* In the event of a foreign war, such an insurrection is highly probable, especially should it be encouraged by the enemy.

turn and say, "This is a delicate question : it belongs to us alone : you have no right to meddle with it : as sure as you do, the Union will be dissolved : fanatics, beware" !!!

Northern men understand their rights on this subject, and they are unalterably determined to maintain them.

3. *To "aim to convince our fellow-citizens" in the South "by arguments addressed to their understandings and consciences, that slave-holding is a heinous sin in the sight of God ; and that the duty, safety, and interests of all concerned, require" that the whole system should be abolished, without expatriation, in the speediest and best manner possible.*

"Arguments addressed to the understandings and consciences of men" (the only weapons which we at the North have a right to use) are no interference with their "exclusive rights ;" otherwise

it is high time for us to put a stop by legislative enactments to the discussion of the temperance question in every shape ; since the manufacturers, venders, and consumers of ardent spirits hold in their own hands the "exclusive right," so far as man is concerned, to cease from these practices. If anti-slavery men at the North have assailed their slave-holding brethren in the South with uncourteous, unchristian, and slanderous language, let them be rebuked for this sin ; but let not the ridiculous charge of attempting to legislate for the South, or to interfere with their "domestic policy," be preferred against them.

In the present excited state of the community it seems to be almost impossible to maintain a free intercourse with the South on this momentous question. I hope, for the honor of human nature and for the welfare of our nation, that it will not always be so ; but that both parties, laying

aside all opprobrious epithets, will come to the consideration of the subject with manly dignity, courage, candor, and benevolence ; remembering that they are acting for generations of unborn millions. Such a kind, free, and Christian interchange of feelings and views on this solemn question, is a "consummation" of moral influence "devoutly to be wished for."

#### MANNER IN WHICH THE QUESTION SHOULD BE DISCUSSED.

This is of immense importance. If there is on the face of the globe a difficult and delicate question, demanding the utmost wisdom, prudence, and firmness on the part of those who discuss it, this is that question. It involves immense interests, highly excited feelings, and inveterate prejudices. Let that man who handles it with rude and reckless contempt of



consequences be assured that Jehovah will not hold him guiltless. The following are some of the principles which ought to regulate our discussions of this solemn subject:

1. *It is our duty to maintain perfect composure of mind.*

It does not become those who have a good cause to get angry, and deal in foul-mouthed abuse and bitter vituperation. These weapons belong of right to those who have exhausted their entire stock of arguments. It requires neither grace, nor knowledge, nor courage, nor benevolence, to heap opprobrious epithets upon men, hundreds of miles off, under pretext of calling things by their right names. But to meet their errors with truth: to listen to their objections with candor: to treat their prejudices with kindness: to bear their opposition with patience: to acknowledge their excellences with cheerfulness: to receive their reproofs with meekness:

and to be rewarded for all our well meant efforts with reproach, *without losing our temper*;—does require no ordinary amount of holiness.

2. *It is our duty to maintain a spirit of uniform kindness.*

My views on this point are so perfectly expressed by President Edwards that I will take the liberty to transcribe his words.

“The bitter root of censoriousness must be totally rooted out, as we would prepare the way of the Lord. It has nourished and upheld many other things contrary to the humility, meekness, and love of the gospel. The minds of many have received an unhappy turn, in some respects, with their religion. There is a certain point or sharpness, a disposition to a kind of warmth, that does not savor of that meek, lamb-like, sweet disposition that becomes Christians. Many have now been so long habituated to it, that they do not know how to get out of it; but we must

get out of it, the point and sharpness must be blunted, and we must learn another way of manifesting our zeal for God.”—*Edwards on Revivals, Part IV. Sec. 4.*

Again : “ It has been the manner of some persons to speak of almost every thing they see amiss in others, in the most harsh, severe, and terrible language. It is frequent of them to say of others’ opinions, or conduct, or advice ; or of their coldness, their silence, their caution, their moderation, and their prudence, and many other things that appear in them, that they are from the devil or from hell ; that such a thing is devilish, or hellish, or cursed ; and that such persons are serving the devil, or the devil is in them, and they are soul-murderers, and the like ; so that the words *devil* and *hell* are almost continually in their mouths. And such kind of language they will commonly use, not only towards wicked men, but towards them that they themselves allow to be the

true children of God, and also towards ministers of the gospel, and others that are very much their superiors. And they look upon it a virtue and very high attainment thus to behave themselves. "Oh," say they, "we must be plain-hearted and bold for Christ, we must declare war against sin wherever we see it, we must not mince the matter in the cause of God, and when speaking for Christ.

"What a strange device of the devil is here to overthrow all Christian meekness and gentleness, and even all show and appearance of it, and to defile the mouths of the children of God, and to introduce the language of common sailors among the followers of Christ, under a cloak of high sanctity, and zeal, and boldness for Christ! And it is a remarkable instance of the weakness of the human mind, and how much too cunning the devil is for us.

"The grand defense of this way of talking is that they say no more than what is

true ; they only speak the truth without mincing the matter.

“But it is a grand mistake that we may commonly use, concerning one another, all such language as represents the worst of each other, according to strict truth.”  
—*Ibidem*, Sect. 1.

This hard and censorious spirit he very justly ascribes to spiritual pride. That anti-slavery men at the North have greatly displeased God by indulging it, cannot be denied. Nor is the goodness of their cause any apology. For if it is, then Satan himself may set about the work of demolishing heathen temples, and charge all who presume to object to his course with being the abettors of idolatry, because he is on the side of God and of truth.

In thus frankly censuring these men, where I think that the cause of abolition requires it, let me not for a moment be understood as joining in the absurd hue and cry which has been raised against

them by designing men at the South and elsewhere, who wish to "ride in the whirlwind and direct the storm," and in which I regret to say that many good men have joined.

Because they have exposed the heinous guilt of the slave system, (not always, it must be confessed, in the kindest spirit,) they have been accused of wishing to excite the slaves to deeds of insurrection and blood.\*

Because they have earnestly remonstrated with the Southern States for perpetuating the system of slavery, they have been charged with attempting to wrest

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\* The man that would encourage the slaves to rise up in rebellion against their masters deserves to be hanged. We cannot, however, consent to stop the discussion of this question at the North for fear that the slaves should discover that we consider their masters guilty for holding them in bondage. Publications addressed to the reason and consciences of the masters are not "seditious" or "incendiary" in any proper sense of the word. If they are, then all efforts to persuade those who are injuring their fellow-men to repent, are "seditious" and "incendiary."

their slaves out of their hands by legislative enactments.

Because they have maintained the duty and expediency of immediately abolishing the slave system, and substituting in its place wise and equitable laws for the regulation of the colored people which shall recognise them as freemen, they have been accused of wishing to have them all turned loose upon society at once without restraint.

Because they have plainly pointed out the ruinous tendency of the slave system in its influence upon the United States, they have been accused of wishing to dissolve the Union.\*

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\* It has been the policy of certain prominent men in the Southern States to carry their obnoxious measures, by holding up *in terrorem* a dissolution of the Union. When Missouri applied for admission to the Union, the non-slaveholding states wished to exclude slavery from the territory; but these men predicted a dissolution of the Union: so the North compromised. The same argument was used to procure a repeal of the tariff: and now we are solemnly

They have been branded as "incendiar-ies," "fanatics," and "traitors," while all proof of these grievous charges has been carefully withheld.

They have been held up to public execration as the offscouring of all things, as "pestilent fellows" and "movers of

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warned against the discussion of the Slavery Question in any shape, upon the ground that this will inevitably lead to a dissolution of the Union. If Northern men will allow themselves to be awed into silence by this argument, they will soon find it coming up to their sorrow on one question of local interest after another, until they are required to yield every thing.

The Union is dear to us at the North. We do not wish to have it broken. If it is to be dissolved, let it be the act of the South, and not our act: and when the nations of the earth shall demand of them the reason, let them turn and say, "We converted a portion of our fellow-men into chattels personal: we bought, sold, mortgaged, and leased them at pleasure: we deprived them by law of the privilege of reading God's Word: when they escaped from under our dominion into the Northern States, we called upon our brethren to surrender them again into bondage: and when they earnestly (and sometimes rudely and unkindly) remonstrated with us, we were offended and dissolved the Union."



sedition," throughout all the United States ; though all candid men at the North, who have had an opportunity of knowing and appreciating their characters, are compelled by stubborn facts to admit that they are honest and good men.

And yet these calumniators of anti-slavery men are preaching against calumny—with beams in their own eyes, they are endeavoring to pull out the motes from their neighbors' eyes !

3. *It is our duty to maintain a tolerant spirit.*

Men that are agreed with their brethren on the fundamental point that the slave system is sinful and not to be in any way countenanced or abetted, are not to be hardly judged or censured because they differ from them as to the best mode of combating the evil. Neither are they to be denounced as timid, over-prudent, vacillating *fence-men*, because they cannot clear, at a single bound, every "middle

wall of partition " that others may think proper to build. Where God draws *his* line of duty we have no right to hesitate: we must keep wholly on the prescribed side. But where uninspired men draw *their* line, we are at perfect liberty to stand on *either* side, or *directly upon* it, according to our views of duty.

4. *It is our duty to make the slavery question subordinate to the gospel.*

It should not be made the all-absorbing topic of conversation and discussion, so as completely to fill the whole horizon of our thoughts, and mix itself with every thing we say and do. The gospel of Christ alone can claim this high pre-eminence.

5. *It is our imperative duty to give this momentous subject a place in our prayers.*

The slave system is undoubtedly the most enormous evil under which our nation groans. It lies at the foundation

of the unhappy sectional jealousy which has existed for so many years between the North and the South.

It is a vine of Sodom, whose grapes are gall, and whose clusters are wormwood; its poisonous branches are rapidly overshadowing the length and the breadth of our land. Until it is finally eradicated from the soil of these United States, it will be to the whole nation a "ROOT OF BITTERNESS" springing up to trouble us; and it will, if it is not speedily extirpated, assuredly expose us to the righteous displeasure of that God who is no respecter of persons. Human strength will not avail to effect its removal from our midst. We must have the help of God, or we are undone, and for this help he will be inquired of by his people.

## DUTY OF THE CHURCHES.

It is the duty of the churches to testify the truth respecting the system of slavery. It is true that it is a heinously guilty system, not to be in any way countenanced or abetted ; and they ought unequivocally to say so. The man who at the present day maintains his right to buy, sell, or hold his fellow-men as chattels personal, is, in my view, unworthy of the fellowship of the saints. Were the responsibility of deciding whether such a man should be admitted to the membership of a church over which I presided, or rejected ; with my present views of duty, I should certainly exclude him as guilty of an evident immorality. Yet, considering the numerous and formidable embarrassments which the laws of most of the slave-holding states have wickedly thrown in the way of those masters who are willing to emancipate

their slaves, I would not break fellowship with a Christian brother, simply because he held the legal relation of master to a portion of his fellow-men, where I had reasonable evidence that he honestly desired to know and do his duty;—evidence, I mean, derived not from his words, but from his actions. My views of the duty of slave-holders in such circumstances have been given above.

I have now given an honest exhibition of my views on this question. In so doing I have felt under all the solemn responsibilities of a witness called to give testimony in a case involving the temporal and eternal interests of millions “born and to be born.” Should I hereafter see reason for altering these views in any respect, I hold myself under solemn obligation to the cause of truth to do so with frankness and candor.

May the God of our fathers guide all concerned in the discussion of this mo-

mentous subject into such views and conduct as shall be acceptable in his sight. With him are our destinies. His hot displeasure can wither us in a moment. His wrath we can no more withstand than the towering oak can withstand the red lightnings of heaven. He has but to speak, and the sun of our prosperity which has risen with such splendor, will set to rise no more. Oh, that we might feel this solemn truth !









